



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, D.C. 20240

May 4, 2004

## PEP - ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW MEMORANDUM NO. ERM04-2

To: Heads of Bureaus and Offices

From: Director, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance

Subject: Electronic Distribution of Environmental Review Requests

Attached is the office's electronic environmental review (ER) requests distribution policy.

Attachment

## **BACKGROUND**

For over a year the Department's Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) has been distributing certain environmental review (ER) requests by e-mail to facilitate process streamlining and provide reviewers a more timely method in which to review a document and prepare comments. In keeping with the President's initiative on expanding the use of electronic systems to deliver government services (E-Government) and provide greater accessibility, OEPC has developed an Internet-based system for posting certain ER requests for electronic access by bureaus.

This system has been tested and will continue to be adjusted as needed. Users have commented on the system, and we have considered those comments and made changes as appropriate. We have not made all changes suggested since, to do so, would have tended to increase the actions to be taken by OEPC staff or would have made the Internet site more cumbersome than necessary. We made a conscious effort to balance the workload of the staff with the needs of the users in the bureaus. We believe that the Internet-based system has the necessary information required to ensure that users can easily access ER requests under their purview.

This system is not intended to replace or usurp the authorities or internal process coordination efforts of the bureaus or regional environmental offices. Field offices should continue to process and coordinate replies as stipulated by their managers.

## **ELEMENTS OF THE SYSTEM**

1. Most ERs will be distributed by this system. Those that will not be distributed by this system are those still being published on paper or CD-ROM only. We will continue to distribute those ERs with a paper memorandum by regular and inter-office mail. These ERs will be posted on the web site ER database but not on the ER distribution link.
2. The OEPC web site has an abbreviated database of ERs that is updated daily and displays the previous three months of ERs. This database is located at: <http://www.doi.gov/oepc/nrm.html>. Go to "Quick Links", "Environmental Review Databases", "ER database." At this site you can search by key word in a title to see if OEPC has received and processed a particular ER. (Note: while not part of this ERM, you may also access the Department's recent EISs in the "DOI EIS Database.")
3. At the same "Quick Links" area, you can access the recent ER distribution memoranda that have been issued at "Environmental Review Distributions (Bureau ER Notifications)." These memos will be maintained on this site for three months.
4. The "Environmental Review Distributions" area has been structured so that the user can begin at the top of the list to see the latest ER by the "Date Posted." It is recommended that bureau users check this site on a daily basis and download the

appropriate files by clicking on the "pdf" icon. The file may be printed or attached to an e-mail going to another office. We recommend creating a folder on your computer to hold downloaded ERs (please see the attachment to this memorandum).

5. Each entry's State location is included in the "Title" field, and bureau assignments are displayed in the "Bureaus Addressed" field so that users do not have to open all postings on a given day. Once opened and printed or downloaded, the file contains the remaining information necessary to begin the review.

6. At the time OEPC makes a posting, an automatic e-mail notification will be dispatched to at least two pre-selected persons in each bureau. We consider this to be added insurance that someone in a bureau will know of a particular review. Attached to that automatic e-mail will be a copy of the ER distribution memorandum. This will allow the user to obtain the distribution memorandum both from the web site and from the e-mail notification. If the e-mail is ever lost, the distribution memorandum will still be available on the web site for three months.

#### **NOTE ABOUT ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS**

No electronic system will operate perfectly at all times. Please consider this when unable to access our site. The problem could be on either end. We would appreciate it if you would first check with your network or computer staff before calling OEPC. If they confirm that your system is operating properly and that your accessing procedures are correct, call OEPC and we will try to determine if our site is functioning properly. If you are new to electronic systems and cannot get the help you need in using this system in your office, please call the Natural Resources Management Team at 202-208-5464 and someone will try to assist you through the process. Please remember that OEPC's web site runs on DOI's servers, and the OEPC staff may not always be able to answer all questions concerning these electronic systems or fix problems that arise from them without contacting our own network staff.

#### **BUREAU CONTACTS**

OEPC requests that you provide us with a list of persons and their backups in your bureau (headquarters and regional offices) normally responsible for daily tracking of electronic ERs. We will maintain this list in order to quickly disseminate new information about the system as it may become available and for other purposes. Please provide this list within two weeks of the effective date of this memorandum. OEPC will then post it on the web site to facilitate inter-bureau discussion.

#### **STATEMENT OF ELECTRONIC DISTRIBUTION**

This system constitutes a valid distribution of a Departmental review request under 516 DM 7. Bureaus are expected to act upon a web posted request the same as if it arrived in paper form. No other notification will be made except for the one noted in item 6 under Elements of the System.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

This system is fully operational on the date of this memorandum.

**SUGGESTED PROCEDURE FOR WORKING WITH WEB-POSTED  
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWS**

1. Create a new folder under “My Documents” or another area where you typically hold current work items. It could be called “ER Distributions”.
2. When you open a particular ER on the OEPC web site in Adobe Acrobat, wait for it to become fully displayed. Then go to “file”, “save”.
3. When the dialog box opens, navigate to the “ER Distributions” folder (make sure you are in that folder) and click save. This will place the file in a location you can find later.
4. Then go to your e-mail program, draft your text, and attach the ER file. Your e-mail program should open another dialog box after you request an attachment. In this dialog box, locate your file and click “ok” or otherwise make a selection to complete the attachment.
5. After attaching the ER memo to your new message, click “send”
6. If you only need to print the memo, use the print function of Adobe Acrobat to do this while the memo is displayed.

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- Notes:
1. This attachment may be updated as necessary without re-issuing the entire ERM.
  2. This ERM assumes the user has or can obtain a basic understanding of computer operating systems and software and has access to Adobe Acrobat Reader and the Internet.
  3. This attachment is dated May 4, 2004.